

Message Text

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53

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 CCO-00 OPR-02 A-01 OMB-01 SAM-01

ACDA-05 /043 W

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O P 041515Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7076

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ATHENS PRIORITY

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON UK

COMMSIXTHFLT

CTF SIX ZERO

CTF SIX ONE

CTF SIX TWO

CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO

FOSIF ROTA SPAIN

FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA

DIA WASHDC

CIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 13771

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, LE

SUBJECT: BEIRUTIS HESITANTLY TEST RETURN OF CALM

REF: BEIRUT 13717 (3 NOV 75 1537Z)

1. SUMMARY: A RELATIVELY PEACEFUL NIGHT NOV 3-4 AND CONTINUED QUIET THROUGH 1400 HOURS (LOCAL) NOV 4 GIVE BEIRUTIS CAUSE FOR HOPE. HOWEVER, AT LAST REPORT PHALANGE AND LEFTISTS REMAIN IN AND AROUND HOTEL DISTRICT, SUSPICIOUSLY EYEING EACH OTHER AND RELUCTANT TO WITHDRAW DESPITE PRESENCE SMALL ISF UNITS. NOTHING NEW IN KARAME-CHAMOUN QUARREL. "NATIONAL DIALOGUE" RESUMED DISCUSSIONS YESTERDAY. FRENCH AMBASSADOR, BACK FROM PARIS, IS ACTIVE. END SUMMARY.

2. BEIRUT SPENT A RELATIVELY UNEVENTFUL NIGHT NOV 3-4, AND THE CITY REMAINS GENERALLY QUIET AS OF 1400 HOURS (LOCAL) TODAY, NOV 4. SMALL UNITS OF INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES (ISF) ARE IN THE INTERNATIONAL HOTEL DISTRICT. TRAFFIC ON STREETS IS LIGHT AS PEOPLE HESITATE FULLY TEST ATMOSPHERE CALM. AT NOON, BEIRUT RADIO DECLARED ALL ROADS LEADING TO BEIRUT WOULD BE SAFE AS OF 1230 HOURS (LOCAL). THE ROAD TO SIDON, PREVIOUSLY BLOCKED AT DAMOUR, OPENED FINALLY THIS MORNING. ZAHLE IS PEACEFUL UNDER A PRECARIOUS CEASEFIRE.

3. THESE OPTIMISTIC SIGNS MARRED BY FACT THAT SOME ARMED MEN REMAIN IN KANTARI-HOTEL AREA. DATT HAS LEARNED THAT LEFTISTS ARE STILL ON BOTTOM FIVE FLOORS OF MURR BUILDING, FROM WHICH THEY HAD ROCKETED PHALANGE IN HOTELS ALL WEEK LONG. THEY HAVE, HOWEVER, LEFT HIGHER FLOORS. PRESENCE OF ONE SQUAD OF ISF AT HOLIDAY INN HAS NOT, ACCORDING TO RELIABLE SOURCE REPORTING TO DATT, PERSUADED DISTRUSTFUL PHALANGE IN HOLIDAY INN TO WITHDRAW. IN FACT, PHALANGE COMMANDER AT THAT HOTEL THIS MORNING REQUESTED REINFORCEMENTS FROM PHALANGE HQ. RESPONSE THIS REQUEST UNKNOWN. AUTHORITIES UP TO AND INCLUDING PREMIER KARAME WORKING HARD TO CLEAR STREETS OF ARMED ELEMENTS, ARRANGE RETURN OF ALL KIDNAP VICTIMS, AND REMOVE THREAT OF SNIPERS. ALTHOUGH MUCH PROGRESS MADE, SUSPICIOUS MOOD OF PHALANGE AT HOLIDAY INN AND LEFTISTS AT MURR BUILDING SHOWS PRECARIOUSNESS OF CEASEFIRE.

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4. UNKNOWN ASSAILANTS DYNAMITED JOINT OFFICES OF INDEPENDENT ARABIC DAILY "AN NAHAR" AND FRENCH-LANGUAGE "L'ORIENT-LE JOUR" LAST EVENING. DAMAGE NOT SERIOUS AND SEVEN PEOPLE SLIGHTLY WOUNDED; NOBODY KILLED.

5. ALTHOUGH PREMIER KARAME ASKED LEBANESE TO RESUME NORMAL ACTIVITIES TODAY, ECONOMIC LIFE REMAINS PARALYZED. KARAME TODAY APPEALED AGAIN TO GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE

EMPLOYEES TO RESUME WORK TOMORROW. BANKER'S ASSOCIATION MEETING TODAY TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE OPENING OF BANKS ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 6. PRESIDENTS OF MERCHANTS'S ASSOCIATION AND OF GENERAL CONFEDERATION OF LABOR, HOWEVER, THINK IT PREMATURE TO CONSIDER ISSUING ANY ADVISORY TO MEMBERS.

6. MANAGER OF PHOENICIA HOTEL REPORTS MINIMAL DAMAGE TO HOTEL. A FOR HOLIDAY INN, SIDES OF BUILDING FROM SMOKE AND MUCH GLASS BLOWN OUT, BUT ACCORDING TO AP REPORTER WHO VISITED SCENE YESTERDAY INTERIOR DAMAGE NOT SEVERE.

7. POLITICAL INTEREST STILL FOCUSES ON SPLIT BETWEEN CHAMOUN AND KARAME. THEY DID NOT LUNCH TOGETHER YESTERDAY AS EXPECTED (REFTEL) BUT ARE SCHEDULED DO SO TODAY, AS SEVERAL POLITICAL FIGURES STILL ATTEMPTING MEDIATION. SOME HEAT OUT OF QUARREL TODAY IN VIEW IMPROVED SECURITY SITUATION GENERALLY AND FACT THAT BOTH MEN HAVE REFRAINED FROM FURTHER VERBAL JIBES AT EACH OTHER.

8. "NATIONAL DIALOGUE COMMITTEE" RESUMED WORK YESTERDAY. SEVERAL MEMBERS WERE ABSENT INCLUDING CHAMOUN. DISCUSSION WAS UNSPECTACULAR, WITH SEVERAL PARTICIPANTS STRESSING DAMAGE TO ECONOMY FROM ROUNDS OF STRIFE. KARAME REVIEWED HIS CEASE-FIRE EFFORTS. AT END OF MEETING, KARAME ISSUED UPBEAT PUBLIC STATEMENT AND SAID "DIALOGUE" WILL RESUME STUDY OF POLITICAL REFORMS. HOWEVER, NO ANNOUNCEMENT MADE REGARDING FUTURE MEETINGS OF "DIALOGUE" OR ITS SUBCOMMITTEES. A CABINET MEETING HAS NOW BEEN SET FOR TOMORROW, NOV 5.

99. ON DIPLOMATIC FRONT, PRES FRANGIE RECEIVED FRENCH AMBASSADOR YESTERDAY AT PALACE IN PRESENCE FONMIN TQALA. VISIT WAS LATER BILLED AS "MERELY A COURTESY VISIT" FOLLOWING CONFIDENTIAL

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AMBASSADOR'S RETURN FROM PARIS. PREMIER KARAME ALSO CONFERRED WITH FRENCH AMBASSADOR TODAY ABOUT THE "GENERAL SITUATION". NEWS FROM PARIS THAT THE ELYSEE IS PLANNING MOVES IN LEBANESE CRISIS (PARIS 28555) WAS REPORTED ON BEIRUT RADIO YESTERDAY AND IS ATTRACTING PUBLIC INTEREST. GODLEY

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